Good Theater, Bad Politics

g performance so

s merely irritated
ress, which doesn't
Nixon's performa-
ten very big trial.

APPROACH

The President's approach
ress and the courts is
s the same as his attitude toward the Congress:
public attack.

Richard Vale, author of
ed M. Nixon,
had a problem of
confidence in his
the Presidency
he did, and then
this lack of con-
it on the hurrah
al deceptions and
ionage and sabo-
own supporters,
congressional in-
and newspaper
the facts.

To save the President "an
four months on
television time, he
attacked "by in-
leak, by frankly
eers of communi-
was bound to
ay public con-
President. Mr.

Mike Mansfield of the Sen-
ate and Thomas (Tip) O'Neill of the House of Representatives have been
political adversaries.

But Mr. President, you
have to go to Watergate
telling the Congress to shove it.

"We have had this year,"
he told the press, "as far as
press is concerned, a dif-

He lives under the domination of fear. As he sees it, the world, the Congress, the courts, the press are all against him.

He feels that many of his own national security officials are suspect and have to be bugged, and it is reported that he even had his own brother followed and wire tapped by the Secret Service.

The interesting — if troubling — thing about all this is why with 3½ years to go and with all his problems he keeps on pressing the independence, freedom and integrity of the Congress, the courts and the press, and then fusses with them, defies them and blames them for his agonies and insists on fighting on three or four fronts at the same time.

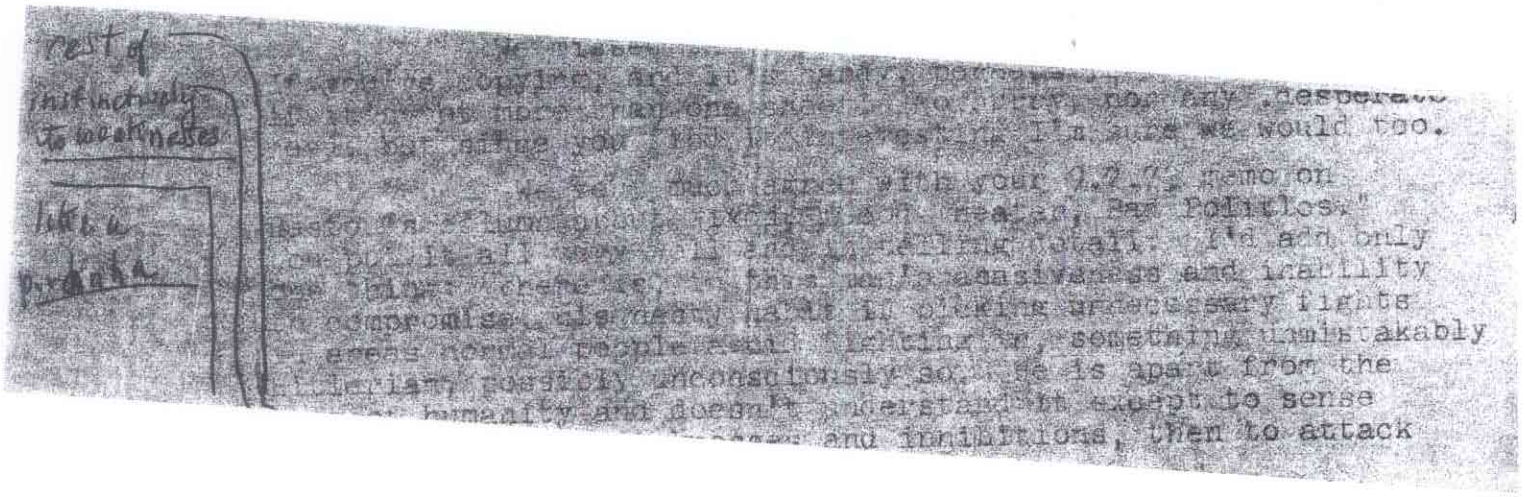
For almost everybody in Washington, it's a game to keep on psychoanalyzing the strange actions of the President — his restless movements from Camp David to Florida to San Clemente, his long silences and disappearances and then his sudden appearances and defiant proclamations.

The real key to the secret of the President's confidence problem is not so much the facts of Watergate, disturbing as they are, but the attitudes and atmosphere that made Watergate possible and the deceptive manipulations and inconsistent testimony of the cast that perpetuate the courts and the press.

His confidence problem, which is clear in the popularity polls and which he has not yet faced, was defined long ago by Homer:

"For I hold that man as hateful as the gates of Hell,

"who says one thing, while another in his heart lies hidden well."


rest of
instinctively
to weakness
like a
predator